



## Ratification Kit

# Sierra Leone

### **Why is it important for Sierra Leone to accede to the United Nations Protocol to abolish the death penalty?**

Sierra Leone's Parliament unanimously abolished the death penalty in July 2021. Before that, Sierra Leone was an abolitionist country in practice and the last execution in Sierra Leone took place in 1998.

Ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is extremely important, both nationally and locally, because it is the only text with worldwide reach aiming to abolish the death penalty.

Acceding to the Protocol is a very symbolic act, reflecting the universal trend towards abolition of capital punishment, considered to be cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. **It is essential that the world's**

**abolitionist countries, in law or in practice, ratify this Protocol.**

### **What are the international commitments already taken by Sierra Leone to accede to the Protocol?**

Sierra Leone also demonstrated its commitment as regards abolition of the death penalty by voting in favour of four **United Nations General Assembly Resolutions** for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty in 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2020. Sierra Leone abstained in 2007, 2008 and 2010 and was absent in 2018.

Sierra Leone participated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of the **Universal Periodic Review** of the **Human Rights Council** in May 2021. Sierra Leone accepted the 14 recommendations aiming at the ratification of the Protocol.

The **Human Rights Council** would inevitably commend Sierra Leone if it ratified the Protocol before its next review in 2026.

The **Human Rights Committee** and the **Committee against Torture** invited in 2014 the State party to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR.

### **What are the steps to be taken as regards internal law?**

According to Article 7.3 of the Protocol, it “shall be open to accession by any State that has ratified the Covenant or acceded to it.”

**Sierra Leone ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1996** and it is therefore competent to accede to this Protocol.

Among the obligations incumbent upon Sierra Leone following accession to the Protocol are the **prohibition of executions** and **withdrawal of the death penalty from internal criminal law**.

### **What are the legal obstacles to accession?**

There is **no legal obstacle** as Sierra Leone is an abolitionist country and as the last execution took place in 1998.

We therefore encourage Sierra Leone to accede to the Protocol as soon as possible.

### **How can accession to the Protocol be applied?**

The Protocol shall come into force three months after the instruments of accession have been deposited with the UN Secretary General (Article 8.2 of the Protocol).

According to Article 3 of the Protocol, Sierra Leone must submit reports to the Human Rights Committee covering the measures it has adopted to give effect to the Protocol.

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty also encourages Sierra Leone to support the adoption of an **African Protocol** on the abolition of the death penalty.

*For more information, contact the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty and visit its website: <https://worldcoalition.org/campagne/just-one-more-step-ratifying-international-and-regional-protocols/>*